



# HEALTH CARE FACTS

## Middle Class Families

In North Carolina, premiums have grown five times faster than wages. In 1996, the average family premium was \$6,000. Today it's \$12,000. Without health care reform, premiums would skyrocket to \$24,000 by 2016 – or half of the average North Carolina family income.

In March 2010, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act became law ([PL 111-148](#)). This law makes historic reforms to our health care system. For **MIDDLE CLASS FAMILIES**, health care reform:

- ✓ **Reduces health care costs**
- ✓ **Strengthens coverage for children, young adults, and families**
- ✓ **Ensures you can keep the coverage you have and guarantees coverage if you change or lose your job**

### Reduces health care costs

- This law immediately eliminates co-pays for preventive services and immunizations.
- Employees will be eligible for discounts on health insurance premiums, up to 30%, if they participate in wellness programs offered through their employer. With an average individual premium of \$250 a month or \$3,000 a year, the 30% discount would mean a savings of \$900 a year.
- Emergency rooms are the most expensive, least efficient form of care. For the cost of one visit to the emergency room in Hendersonville, the Blue Ridge Community Health Center could provide health care to an individual for an entire year. Under this new law, 94% of Americans are expected to have health insurance coverage, so families will no longer be paying the hidden \$1100 tax for uncompensated care.
- Through insurance market reforms and competition in the Exchange, health reform will reduce family health insurance premiums by \$1,570 - \$2,240 for the same benefits.
- The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that this new law will reduce the deficit by \$124 billion in the next 10 years, and by over \$1 trillion in the following decade.

### Strengthens coverage for children, young adults, and families

- This law prohibits insurance companies from excluding coverage of pre-existing conditions for the 2.3 million children in North Carolina, starting this year.
- It allows nearly 900,000 young adults to stay on their parents' insurance plans until they reach age 26. In 2014, 1.4 million North Carolinians under age 30 will have access to less costly catastrophic-only health insurance plans.

- Nearly 500,000 North Carolinians purchase health insurance through the individual market. This law prohibits insurers from denying coverage or charging excessive rates for pre-existing conditions or for being female. It prohibits insurers from rescinding coverage once you get sick. It eliminates excessive annual and all lifetime caps in insurance coverage.

**Ensures you can keep the coverage you have and guarantees coverage if you change or lose your job**

- Individuals and employers who like their health insurance and doctors will keep them.
- Starting this year, if people lose their jobs, they can purchase insurance through a high-risk pool.
- By 2014, if people lose their jobs, they can purchase quality, affordable health insurance through state-run Exchanges. Almost one million North Carolinians will receive premium tax credits to help make health insurance even more affordable through the Exchange. During the first five years that the health insurance Exchange is operational, North Carolinians will receive \$15.4 billion in premium and cost-sharing tax credits to further reduce the cost of health insurance.